

EPA Administrator Tours Lower Fox River

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

During an August swing of the Great Lakes region, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Mike Leavitt stopped in Green Bay for a tour of the Lower Fox River to learn more about the waterway's contamination and cleanup.

Leavitt was accompanied by EPA Deputy Regional Administrator Bharat Mathur, Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Wastewater Engineer Gary Kincaid and Green Bay Planning Director Rob Strong. Traveling by boat, they started at the mouth of the river at the bay and cruised south to view sampling areas in preparation for future dredging.

Hahnenberg appreciated being able to spend time with Leavitt. "It's a rare opportunity to meet the administrator," he said. "It was an honor that he was interested in touring the site. To be able to show him the progress that we have made was a plus."

In addition to hearing about EPA's largest dredging project to date, Leavitt also saw some areas of Green Bay in need of an environmental cleanup before they can be reused by local businesses. These areas are referred to as "brownfields."

Hahnenberg said he hoped the tour was beneficial to Leavitt. "I tried to describe how large the site is, how significant the environmental impacts are, and how cooperatively we are working with the companies as well as with our federal, state and local partners."



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Mike Leavitt (center) learns about the Lower Fox River project from EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg while on a tour of the river.

Little Lake Butte des Morts Meeting Held In Neenah

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency hosted an August 26 public information session to kick off the start of dredging activities on Little Lake Butte des Morts.

With sediment dredging scheduled to start in mid-September, the session at the Neenah Public Library gave local residents an opportunity to meet with DNR, EPA and Little Lake Cleanup Team representatives who explained what would be taking

See Meeting, Page 3

Great Lakes Officials Meet to Streamline Fish Advisories

By Jim Morrison, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Chemical contaminants in sport-caught and store-bought fish throughout the country, as well as different state and federal advisory approaches, all challenge consumers and anglers when trying to make appropriate choices.

To address this challenge, representatives from Great Lakes states and Indian tribes met on September 8 and 9 in Madison, Wis. to develop a more uniform, comprehensive and understandable advisory message.

Oneida Rep. Steps Down

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Environmental Specialist Tom Nelson has resigned from the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin after nine years in that position.



Tom Nelson

As the tribe's representative on the Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council's restoration technical representatives team, Nelson helped approve natural resource damage assessment projects in Green Bay and the Fox Valley. The lifelong Green Bay resident was instrumental in helping the

tribe benefit from NRDA settlements by ensuring that part of the restoration money be spent on a lake to be built on the reservation.

Nelson was also involved in the Lower Fox River cleanup by reviewing documents, providing input and attending community meetings on behalf of the tribe. He has since signed up as a volunteer for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Representing FWS, Nelson may be called upon to take photos, lead tours of NRDA sites and contribute to the *Fox River Current*.

Jennifer Hill-Kelley, will replace Nelson as the Oneida contact person. She can be reached at (920) 496-5354.

Consumers are offered advice about the importance of fish consumption for health, but also receive multiple messages about guarding against contaminants found in fish. Balancing these messages is a significant challenge.

According to Dr. Henry Anderson, chief medical officer of the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, "We want the public to enjoy the health benefits of fish consumption and the fun of catching their own fish," he said. "Our goal is to develop a uniform and simple method of communicating information to help the public achieve these goals."

Participants looked for ways to incorporate advisory information for commercial and sport-caught fish into current advisory guidance. Frequency of consumption was an important topic. While the number of people who eat sport-caught fish at least twice a week may be significant, the number eating tuna and other store-bought fish is much larger.

Action items at the meeting included:

- adding mercury to the current Great Lakes advisory
- including guidance for the most sensitive consumers (women of reproductive age and children under age 15)
- standardizing protocol and meal categories for developing guidance
- sharing information among regional groups

Further discussion will occur among the represented states and tribes. It is anticipated that this will result in the sharing of successful approaches and continued movement toward a more uniform advisory message. Such a message would likely include promoting safe fishing sites, as is currently done by Great Lakes Indian tribes and offering examples of safe-eating practices for store-bought fish in advisory booklets.

Anderson concluded, "We hope to deliver advice to the public that is consistent and that helps them understand the abundant opportunity for enjoying fish."

EPA Hudson River Staff Visits Little Lake Butte des Morts

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA staff from Chicago welcomed two of their colleagues from upstate New York during an early October visit to Little Lake Butte des Morts.

Joined by members of the Little Lake Cleanup Team, David King, director of EPA's Hudson River field office and Leo Rosales, Hudson River community involvement coordinator, were treated to an explanation of the cleanup as well as to a boat ride on the lake. "We were impressed with the cooperation by both the paper companies and the governments," King said. "It showed what we have been saying all along. Dredging is not noisy or dirty and resuspension can be controlled."

Because the Hudson River cleanup calls for methods similar to some of those being used at the Lower Fox River, King and Rosales wanted to see the progress being made during the early stages of the project. "It's pretty much what we want to do," said King.

In addition to a first-hand look at the dredge, heavy plastic geotubes, water treatment plant and water safety markers, King and Rosales were interested in learning about community acceptance of the cleanup once it had started. "Many people in our local communities in New York have a vision of a major navigational dredging project because that is what they were lead to believe," King continued. "We're trying to overcome that image."

He compared the Lower Fox and Hudson River communities. "Our cleanup messages are the same," he stated. "But, not all of our stakeholders want the cleanup to occur and you have people who want a cleanup."

During their visit, they met with a few randomly selected residents who supported the lake cleanup. "They were all pretty consistent in what they told us," he explained. "It's not a big deal to them and, in fact, they wanted it to happen sooner."

King said the people he talked to love to fish and love the idea that the lake is being cleaned up. "I talked to



David King, director of EPA's Hudson River field office (right) discusses the Little Lake Butte des Morts cleanup with Jim Hahnenberg, EPA remedial project manager for the Lower Fox River.

someone who lives near the dredge and he said to take out as much sediment as possible," King recalled. "His only complaint was that it isn't going 24 hours a day seven days a week because the hum puts him to sleep."

Meeting from Page 1

place in the lake this fall. The meeting room had four stations set up that addressed dredging, sediment handling, landfill disposal and boater safety.

About 30 people attended the session, which is part of the ongoing effort to keep the public informed and involved in the cleanup of contaminated sediment at Little Lake Butte des Morts. According to Greg Hill, DNR implementation coordinator, "We plan to have regular sessions like this for the public throughout the four to six-year duration of the project."

"Meetings like this will also help us refine our public involvement plans for the larger cleanup efforts downstream," Hill added. "It's much like the knowledge we'll gain from design and dredging of Little Lake Butte des Morts and can apply in the remainder of the Lower Fox and Green Bay."

The Fox River Current is featuring promising natural resource damage assessment projects in and near the Lower Fox River.

Spotlight On:

Door County Forest Habitat Restoration and Preservation

By Colette Charbonneau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mike Grimm, Northern Wisconsin science specialist for The Nature Conservancy in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., is able to see 20 years into the future while looking at an abandoned farm field that was planted with trees this past spring.

"It will take 20 years before this field is a forest again," visualized Grimm. "It is a long-term process to get forest cover back, which slows down the spring thaw causing less soil and nutrients to run into the Mink River."

The Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council supported TNC's restoration project with natural resource damage assessment and restoration settlement funds to acquire and restore native habitat (forests) in the Mink River watershed. TNC matched NRDA funds with state, federal and private monies making the restoration project larger than any one funding source could complete.

Approximately 189 acres were acquired that contain the headwaters and the last unprotected stretch of land along the east side of the river. The land was under pressure for development. Building homes would have had an adverse affect on water quality in the Mink River.

However, the waters of the Mink River will not run clear with only the preservation of the land surrounding it. Volunteers and TNC employees spent two weeks planting 39,500 seedlings (young trees) to reforest about 68 acres in the river watershed. The seedlings, consisting of oak, maple, ash, pine, cedar, balsam fir, and spruce, were planted by hand and by a machine planter. The planter was donated by the Door County Soil & Water Conservation Department



Shirley Griffin, The Nature Conservancy volunteer and tree planting project coordinator, shows off a machine planter used to plant 39,500 young trees in the Mink River watershed.

and was pulled by a tractor provided by Steve Kalms, a local farmer. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' foresters also lent their expertise in the reforestation effort. The forest that will grow into the future will protect water resources by providing for good infiltration of water back into the ground rather than eroding the shallow Door County soil directly to the Mink River.

According to Shirley Griffin, TNC volunteer and tree planting project coordinator, "The cool, wet spring days were awful for the tree planters but were great for the seedlings and their survival," she stated. "The help from all involved on those cold, gray days was greatly appreciated."

Secondary benefits of the restoration project include the filling-in of forest gaps in the landscape providing

See Spotlight, Page 5

Spotlight from Page 4

big blocks of forest habitat for birds that nest deep in the forest and a safe resting area for those bird species that migrate through the area. The types of trees chosen provide diversity for the forest, maximize habitat use and minimize damage from deer. Deer hunting is allowed on these preserved lands if you contact TNC before hunting season.

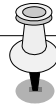
TNC has developed scientific-based management plans for the lands within its project boundaries. The Door Peninsula project office of TNC has been progressively protecting and restoring habitat in the Mink River project area over the years. "The habitat preservation and reforestation work would have been completed sometime," declared Grimm. "The NRDA funds assisted in getting this project started sooner so 20 years until we have a forest begins in 2004 rather than years from now."

The natural resource trustees are comprised of DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Michigan Attorney General, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For further information on NRDA projects, contact Trustee Council Coordinator Colette Charbonneau, FWS, at Colette_Charbonneau@fws.gov or at (920) 866-1726.



Oak seedling planted to restore forested habitat in northern Door County.



Out and About...

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership is made up of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. These partners, as well as other supporting agencies, regularly provide speakers to organizations in the Fox Valley area. The following people recently made presentations:

September

- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA: Loyola University Environmental Law class, Chicago; Superfund process and its application to the Lower Fox River cleanup.

October

- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA and *Greg Hill*, DNR: Earth Charter Community Gathering, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh; general Lower Fox River cleanup and PCB contamination.
- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA: Addressing Uncertainty and Managing Risk at Contaminated Sediment Sites Conference, St. Louis; dredging overview.
- ◆ *Greg Swanson*, DNR: Institute of Supply Management, Northeast Wisconsin chapter, Kimberly; general Lower Fox River cleanup.

Profile On ... Ben Hung

DNR project engineer enjoys complexity of Fox River cleanup

By Kelly Mella, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

When Ben Hung began working as Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource's project engineer for the Lower Fox River cleanup project two and a half years ago, he knew he was in for a challenge—and that's exactly why he took the job.

"What seemed like a royal pain to others seemed like a wonderful opportunity to me," Hung said. "I don't think there's another position in the DNR that would be better for me in terms of learning and developing my career."



Ben Hung

Hung, who grew up in California and earned a degree in environmental engineering from Humboldt State University in northern California, is a relative newcomer to the Fox project and to DNR in general. He's worked for the department for about three and a half years. He spent one year modeling watersheds, lakes, streams and rivers statewide. He was also

instrumental in developing monitoring, sampling and analysis protocols, before being tapped by Greg Hill (DNR implementation coordinator) to fill a vacancy on the Lower Fox River cleanup team. Hung said that others in the department who could have taken the position may have been daunted by its formidable nature, but he embraced the chance to take on such a large-scale and complicated project.

Briefly stated, Hung's role in the cleanup is to "support project decision makers by evaluating technical information." Hung cited his "ability to convey technical information in a non-technical way" as an asset for this portion of his job. He coordinates the review of technical documents associated with the project and makes sure all relevant staff review the appropriate designs and plans. He also acts as the main point of contact for other DNR employees working on projects related to the Lower Fox River cleanup.

Another of his main duties is to manage the oversight consultant team and serve as the department's point of contact in reviewing and monitoring the cleanup work that is being done by the paper companies. "My main goal is to make sure all work done on the project meets the expectations set out in the record of decision," (the document detailing the cleanup plan) he explained.

While he said he enjoys the complicated nature of the project, Hung also noted that it's sometimes very difficult to get all the parties involved to work together, including staff within DNR and other state agencies. It may not have been easy, but Hung said he's gratified to see the project clearly moving forward.

"Nothing about this project is routine," he said, "and people don't like to do non-routine stuff. The

See **Profile**, Page 7

Profile from Page 6

challenge is to identify the issues and get everyone working cooperatively on creative solutions.”

Before moving to Wisconsin about seven years ago with his wife (who is attending veterinary school at University of Wisconsin-Madison), Hung worked as an analytical chemist in California. He’s also worked in construction and at a fish smokehouse. He had these wise words to share with anyone who spends a lot of time with our scaled friends: “If you’re working in fish, don’t wash your clothes in hot water. The heat bakes the oils from their skin right in, and you’ll never get rid of the smell.”

Hung said he enjoys Madison. “Folks are friendly and it’s a good place to live,” he stated.

He had especially high praise for the quality of road bicycle riding available in Wisconsin. “It’s pretty much as good as any place in the world,” Hung continued. He attributes this to the variety of lightly traveled but paved rural roads that exist because of the need for milk trucks to reach the farms that are spread across the landscape.

When he is not working or biking, Hung spends time with his wife and their two cats and two dogs. He’s also branched out into the business world with a few friends. They started a fair-trade coffee importing, roasting and wholesale distribution company. He said the company, called Just Coffee, is going strong with clients across the country. In a nice turn of events, Just Coffee is even served in the DNR central office coffee shop.



Check out these Web sites:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/lowerfox/> **New!**
<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver/>
<http://www.fws.gov/r9dec/nrdar/nrdamain.html>
<http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/nrda/>

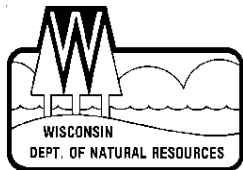
Information Available at Local Libraries

The Intergovernmental Partners invite the public to review technical reports, fact sheets and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the local libraries listed below. Information repositories at the public libraries in DePere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown have been discontinued. However, binders containing fact sheets are being maintained at these locations as well as at the following repositories:

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 107 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5200



An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the final site cleanup plan was based, is also available for review at two DNR offices: 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, Wis. and 101 S. Webster St., 2nd Floor, Madison, Wis. An administrative record is also available at the EPA Record Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago, Ill.



Prepared by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Supporting agencies include Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by all members of the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership.

INSIDE FOX RIVER CURRENT

EPA Administrator Tours Lower Fox River	1
Little Lake Butte des Morts Meeting Held in Neenah	1
Great Lakes Officials Meet to Streamline Fish Advisories	2
Oneida Rep. Steps Down	2
EPA Hudson River Staff Visits Little Lake Butte des Morts	3
Spotlight On: Door County Forest Habitat Restoration and Preservation	4
Out and About...	5
Profile On... Ben Hung	6
Web Site Addresses	7
Information Repository Locations	7

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